Christian Steward
in His Church

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THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD IN HIS CHURCH

GEORGE L. MORELOCK

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THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD IN HIS CHURCH

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THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD IN HIS CHURCH

CHRISTIAN Stewardship may be defined as a sense of moral responsibility for all of life. Life is a gift from God; it has been redeemed by Christ, the Son of God; it has an immortal, eternal value. When this interpretation of life becomes the life philosophy of the person, then there is developed within him a keen sense of moral responsibility for his life; to develop all his powers of personality to the utmost and then to use them unselfishly in service to humanity. This is Stewardship.

In view of such an interpretation of life, a person cannot neglect anything that will contribute to his life development. Commensurate with his opportunities, a person sins most against his fellow-men when he fails to make the most of himself. Again he sins against his fellow-men when he prostitutes his powers of personality for selfish ends.

It may be that his best gift is only one

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"talent," but as a good steward he cannot "bury it in the ground" without suffering the awful consequences: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

In this brief article we wish to confine our discussion of Stewardship to the relation a Christian steward has to his Church in this modern day at three particular points: (1) The worship services; (2) personal service; and (3) giving.

The Worship Services

A Christian steward will be found in the worship services of his church. First of all, he will realize that he cannot develop his powers of personality to their best without it. Man is innately religious, and he never develops the full powers of his life until he develops to the utmost this element of his being. Worship of God cannot be omitted without devastating loss.

Naturally one can worship alone, in private devotions, through Bible study, prayer, and meditation. There is something, however, in public worship that ministers to a person's needs in a remarkable way. We know that group consciousness has some-

thing to do with it. Jesus was calling attention to this when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." When people sing gospel songs together, when they unite their hearts in prayer, when they think together under the leadership of the spiritual message of the preacher, when they come in contact with one another in the most marvelous fellowship that has ever been developed among men, then something of an unusual character takes place. No substitute has ever been found for public worship.

The effort to adjust the daily routine so as to be able to go to the house of God; the fact that the act of worship is an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God; that it is a public declaration to one's neighbors of belief in God and adherence to his Church—these are of special significance.

Another important factor is that only in such worship can one do his full part to make possible a great program of work and service on the part of the congregation. Public worship builds the unity and strength of the congregation. No church is stronger

for a world task, or even for meeting its responsibility in its own community, than its worship service.

If one is a Christian steward, he is compelled to go to the house of worship for these reasons and as an example to his children and to his neighbors. In no other way can he say so eloquently, "Religion is a primary concern with me."

One of the great obstacles that lie in the way of the progress and ministry of the Christian Church is the absence of so many of its members from the worship services. If a man does not have enough interest in the Kingdom of God to get up on Sunday morning, take a bath, put on his best clothes, and go to the house of God, then *he has no interest at all.* Of course, we except the sick and shut-ins in this statement. The great multitudes of our country are seeing this attitude on the part of so many church members—about sixty-five per cent of them—and they are saying to themselves, "Religion is a matter of little or no concern to them," and this fact speaks so forcefully that it con-

stitutes the greatest single drawback to the extension of the Gospel of Christ today.

A Christian steward will not be found lacking at this point because of its profound relationship to his own spiritual development and his influence with others.

Personal Service

A real Christian steward will find some work to do in the Church. And no one will have to beg him to do it. All that will be needed will be to adapt his talent to some particular task. Of course, talent for church work varies among different persons. It will be discovered along the following lines:

Teaching in the church school.—No finer field of service can be found than this. It takes consecration, however. The one accepting this place of responsibility must be willing to invest a large amount of time in study—of the literature of his own church, of the Bible, of parallel books—so as to be able to present the truth of the lesson in an attractive and gripping fashion. In addition, much prayer, thought, and time must be given to making personal contacts,

which mean even more in the development of the individuals of the class. The goal of every teacher should be to render the greatest possible service in developing into genuine Christian stewards all the members of the class.

An active member of the Board of Stewards.—Here is another fine opportunity for investment of time and talent in the work of the Church. Attendance upon all the meetings of the Board, careful study to fit one's self for the task, assiduous attention to any special work committed to the hands of the steward, active, aggressive work in this field—all of these enter into the discharge of one's stewardship at this point.

Other special fields of labor in the church can be mentioned: the dedication of one's gift for song, ability to lead in the field of woman's work, young people's work, special evangelistic effort, service in the field of social welfare, etc.

Some, however, will find that they have no special gift in any of these fields. Perhaps the service for such will be found along the line of that of a man I knew years ago.

He could do none of the special things I have mentioned above, but he had a marvelous faculty for *faithfulness.* Whenever the doors of the church were opened, he, together with his family, was present: church school, regular morning and evening services, meetings of the Quarterly Conference, prayer services, and revival meetings. He could always be counted upon to be present. This man was really a good Christian steward because he used to the fullest the one talent he had—*faithfulness.* Then he lived foursquare with his neighbors. They had full confidence in his Christian integrity. Eternity alone can measure the value of such a life.

Giving

A genuine Christian steward will support his Church with an offering, and it will be systematic and proportionate and given as an act of worship. The basis of the gift will be love of God, love of men, and a desire to capture the whole human race with the power of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Perhaps in no other relation does a Christian steward find such severe a test.

Touch a person's material possessions and you touch *him* at a vital point. If he has earned his money, it represents his brain, his brawn, and his blood. It is a part of his personality, and he will not part with it except on compulsion. The compulsion of love is the only sound, secure stewardship principle, certainly the only basis for Christian giving.

As a rule the Christian steward's system will be that of the *separated portion.* He will obey Paul's injunction to "lay by in store." This practice brings into his life a sense of peace, poise, and power, and it also makes it possible for him always to have on hand something to invest in the Kingdom of God through the Church. It will help him to be a good example to his children and neighbors. His offering will help to place the total program of the Church on a permanent basis and thus insure it against the untoward circumstances of the spasmodic, sporadic, haphazard, hit-or-miss methods which are in vogue in so many churches.

Stewardship giving will bless the indi-

vidual and prove to be of infinite blessing to the whole congregation.

The one great need of our Church today is for a great forward movement to give this Gospel of light and life to the whole world. This can be brought nearer to realization by the members of the Church becoming Christian stewards in the matter of worship, personal service, and giving.

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